DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 243 877 SP 024 344

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TITLE The Graham Plan--An Early Attempt to Achieve Sanity in Sport.
PUB DATE 30 Mar 84
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (Anaheim, CA, March 29-April 2, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *Athletes; *Athletics; *College Students; *Eligibility; Financial Support; Higher Education; *Program Development; Scholarships; Student Attitudes; Student Participation; *Student Recruitment; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Graham Plan; University of North Carolina

ABSTRACT

A study examined, from the perspective of the University of North Carolina and its President Frank Porter Graham, the importance of the Graham Plan, which in the 1930s sought to regulate intercollegiate athletics by disallowing preferential treatment of athletes in the area of financial aid. Graham and his supporters desired to prohibit the use of athletic scholarships and other material benefits in recruiting athletes and urged the selection of varsity players from the student body. Though the plan passed on the strength of its idealism, the institutions of the Southern Conference only supported the Graham Plan for one year because it placed them at a competitive disadvantage with non-conference teams and because of widespread media and alumni opposition. The existence of the Graham Plan was brief yet visionary of a later National Collegiate Athletic Association attempt, the Sanity Code. Both failed to effect changes in increasingly popular and commercial intercollegiate athletic programs. This paper is based on an examination of President's papers, Board of Trustees minutes, Chancellor's papers, University records, newspaper reports, the background for its adoption by the Southern Conference, and viewpoints from individuals who opposed the changes. (Author/JMK)

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SP 024 344

Presented at the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance Convention, Anaheim, California, March 30, 1984.

THE GRAHAM PLAN - AN EARLY ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE SANITY IN SPORT. Angela Lumpkin, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The purpose of this study was to examine from the perspective of the University of North Carolina and its President Frank Porter Graham the importance of the Graham Plan which in the 1930's sought to regulate intercollegiate athletics by disallowing preferential treatment of athletes in the area of financial aid. Based on an examination of President's papers, Board of Trustees minutes, Chancellor's papers, University records, and newspaper reports, the background for its adoption by the Southern Conference, viewpoints from individuals who opposed the changes, and its brief existence were discussed. Graham and his supporters desired to prohibit the awarding of athletic scholarships and the giving of other material benefits in recruiting athletes rather than selecting varsity players from the student body. Though passed on the strength of its idealism, the institutions of the Southern Conference only supported the Graham Plan for one year because it placed them at a competitive disadvantage with non-conference teams and because of widespread media and alumni opposition. The existence of the Graham Plan was brief yet visionary of a later NCAA attempt, the Sanity Code. Both failed to affect changes in increasingly popular and commercial intercollegiate athletic programs.

In the mid 1930s Frank Porter Graham, President of the Consolidated University of North Carolina system, assumed the leading role in seeking to more closely regulate intercollegiate athletics, especially within the Southern Conference. This paper will examine the background of, justification for, and opposition to the resultant Graham Plan.

Graham (1909), as a graduating senior at the University of North Carolina, in 1909 voiced his advocacy of athletics if kept in perspective when he defended a recently-adopted, conservative athletic philosophy. The University had committed itself to promote exercise for all students and to varsity teams which evolved from such activities. Still committed to this ideal as an administrator, Graham emphasized that athletes should be treated the same as all other students. Yet the prevailing practice in the 1930s gave athletes, and especially football players, preference in scholarships, loans, jobs, and rooms. Graham stated that these practices violated amateur competition in addition to the existing conference regulations. He proposed,

> With the cooperation of trustees, alumni, faculty, and students the colleges can preserve and advance themselves as educational centers in which intercollegiate sport will become a more representative by-product of the youthful zest for games and athletic skill, the spirit of sportsmanship, and a community-wide participation in athletic play. (McKevlin, 1934, p. 8)

Graham further analyzed that to preserve educational values, athletics, which certainly existed as a vital part of college life, should return to a equitable program in both participation and treatment of all students.

Graham got an opportunity to share his concerns and recommendations for change when he was appointed chairman of a Committee on Group Life of Students of the National Association of State Universities. Due largely to his leadership a series of proposals were presented to the entire membership of this association and adopted by it on November 23, 1935. The Graham Plan attempted to make more

explicit existing athletic regulations rather than to supplant or replace them. This association, which had no enforcement power, simply asked institutions and conferences to consider 11 proposals. First, a student should be ineligible for athletic competition if he received preferential consideration in the matter of tuition, fees, room, board, clothes, books, charge accounts, scholarship, loan, job, or any other financial aid or material consideration from any supporter of that institution. In like manner, no athlete should receive a scholarship, loan, job, or other financial aid from any source other than those awarded by responsible faculty committees. Concerning this second item, rates of pay for jobs should be commensurate with work done and with that received by other students, and all awards and their amounts should be made public. Thirdly, each athlete should be required to state in writing his financial earnings for the preceding year. The fourth recommendation stated that the athletic staff should not recruit through initiated correspondence, distribution of literature, or personal interviews, and they also should insist that alumni and students abide by these same guidelines. Recommendation number five requested that alumni and students through their meetings and publications show their institutional and personal obligations of loyalty and honor by helping to prevent others from violating these proposed athletic eligibility guidelines. Sixth was the one-year rule for eligibility or, in other words, all athletes should complete one full year's work with progressive advancement and be in good academic standing before being eligible for varsity competition. Number seven stated that athletes on conduct or scholastic probation should be prohibited from intercollegiate competition. Athletic staff members according to the eighth proposal should be restricted to receiving monies from their respective institutions for coaching and other services rendered to athletics. The ninth recommendation stated that each athlete should be required to affirm in writing his compliance with the eligibility regulations. To further ensure that athletics be kept in proper educational perspective, athletic accounts should be audited regularly, and no post season athletic contests should be allowed ("Proposals

For The," 1935).

Prior to the adoption of these principles by the National Association of State Universities, the Board of Trustees of the University had favorably responded to Graham's plan. Still, immediate opposition was stated by its Athletic Council. This group, composed of alumni, faculty, and students, on December 16, 1935, unanimously passed a resolution against the Graham Plan because it would prohibit alumni from providing financial aid to athletes ("Resolution Adopted Unanimously," 1935). Resolutions were subsequently passed by alumni associations in fourteen counties and two cities in the state in support of the Athletic Council's position.

Such opposition, however, did not deter Graham in his goal to treat all students alike. At the University he took the jobs formerly reserved for football players away from the coach's control and put them in the hands of a faculty committee. He in effect abolished athletic scholarships by placing an alumni scholarship fund, which had been controlled in the interest of athletics, under the administration of a faculty committee (Graham, 1935). Many alumni accused Graham of discriminating against athletes rather than providing equal treatment for all students. Yet, Graham was unyielding in the face of widespread opposition by alumni and some coaches and by accusations that the recommendations would discriminate against poor students who were athletes.

Since all university presidents had not supported the recommendations of the National Association of State Universities, Graham was anxious to solicit as much support as possible prior to the upcoming meeting of the Southern Conference, in which the University held membership. He wrote to and received encouragement and support from the presidents of Harvard University and Yale University and from Howard Savage of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Savage, who had been the leading figure in the 1929 Savage Report on American College Athletics published by the Foundation, repeatedly made reference to that publication in support of Graham's ideal. Quoting from the report initially and then analyzing the situation Savage (1935) wrote,

> 'In the United States, what is needed in college and school athletics in not more law but a more genuine regard for existing law, not uniformity of requirements respecting eligibility and kindred matters but uniformity and recognition of fundamental principles, especially as affecting the exemplification of sportsmanship; not because sportsmanship is fashionable, but because, even more than it is to-day, it should be appreciated and sincerely regarded in every form of athletic competition' (#23, p. 12). It is my understanding that what you are attempting to do is to bring home to men's consciences certain detailed provisions underlying the amateur status, which are fundamental to the right conduct of American college sport.

Graham also received encouragement for his efforts from other University of North Carolina administrators.

The first major challenge for Graham's noble experiment was a meeting of the administrative heads of the member institutions of the Southern Conference. Six of the ten administrators met for hours of deliberation on December 12, 1935, before giving their unanimous endorsement a month later. These leaders represented North Carolina State College, the University of Maryland, the University of North Carolina, the University of Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and Washington and Lee University. Their recommendations, to be presented at the annual Southern Conference meeting in February, 1936, were similar to, but slightly different from, those of the National Association of State Universities. Their first recommendation specified that athletes could not receive financial aid or special treatment of any sort financially, regardless of the source of the award. All scholarships, loans, jobs, or other sources of financial aid had to be open to all students equally and could only be awarded by responsible faculty committees. Athletes who received financial aid from sources outside the University or who capitalized on their name through commericial advertizing automatically became ineligible. Secondly, athletes had to state in writing their financial status.

The third recommendation included the one-year rule, good standing in the University regarding conduct and academic work, ways of regaining eligibility, and the certification of these facts for all athletes by a University official. The athletic staff's actions regarding no promises of aid to athletes, encouraging alumni, students, and others to recruit only within the rules, and selecting and compensating coaches were discussed in item four. Athletes and members of the athletic staff had to affirm in writing their adherence to all eligibility rules while encouraging others to do likewise. Number five specified that known violations must be reported ("Statement By President").

While Graham led in the approval of these regulations by the Southern Conference, many alumni of the University who supported the existing athletic policies spoke out against the Graham Plan in letters, newspaper articles, and discussions throughout the state. Lest the trustees be unaware of their opinions, a resolution, which was a combined statement from several alumni associations was presented to them on January 31, 1936. After indicating their full support of the Athletic Council's past successes as the group responsible for athletics and of that group's resolution in December, 1935, the alumni's statement criticized the recommendations of the conference administrative heads. The alumni described the recommendations as thoroughly impractical and predicted that they would result in gross hypocrisy since they would be unenforceable and thereby subject the integrity of the University to constant attack. Their statement interpreted the proposals as discriminatory against poor students who were athletes ("Minutes Of The Board," 1936). The trustees took no action on this matter except to refer it to the faculty who in turn endorsed the recommendations as consistent with the idea of faculty responsibility and control of intercollegiate athletics. Similar support, however, was not forthcoming from the students at the University. Phil Hammer, editor of the student newspaper, in expressing what he believed to be the views of the students, wrote unfavorably about the Graham Plan. Despite such opposing efforts, on February 7, 1936, the Southern Conference

members adopted the proposed recommendations.

To ensure that the University's faculty committees on loans, scholarships, and self-help changed their policies so as to administer monies for athletes in accordance with the new Southern Conference regulations, a coordinating committee was established. This group prepared a statement of policy that explained how the University would comply with the regulations. Scholarships would be awarded only by the University and only to students in need or with good academic records. All other financial aid or material benefits from whatever source would be open to all students regardless of athletic ability ("Minutes Of The Meeting," 1936). In addition, Graham (1936) asked that inquiry be made about foundations or agencies that administered loan funds to guarantee that they did not favor athletes. Such loans had to be approved by the faculty committee as having been awarded on the basis of character, scholarship, need, and general merits, and not in consideration of athletic ability.

The Graham Plan as adopted by the Southern Conference, however, existed for less than four months. To allow time for compliance, the conference had voted that the regulations would not come into effect until September 1, 1937. In December of that year, though, the conference members passed Article VII, Rule 13, Section 1 which stated,

> It has been and is an accepted part of the provisions of all intercollegiate athletic conferences that an athlete may be awarded a scholarship, loan, job, or other financial aid on his merits as a person and student on the same basis as other students. The Southern Conference pledges itself to support this policy and holds that member institutions must accept the responsibility for the proper conduct of intercollegiate athletics in their respective institutions. ("Minutes Of The Annual," 1936)

Soon after this Conference rule modification was approved, the faculty of the University concurred leaving Graham with few supporters.

Thus the Southern Conference ended its brief attempt to bring intercollegiate athletics under greater university control. Diligent though his efforts were, by not gaining the support of the alumni and the public and by attempting to rid athletics of its abuses in a radical and singular step Graham had failed (Graham, 1948). Another reason for the failure was that other conferences, such as the Southeastern, awarded athletic scholarships and gave other financial benefits to athletes. So, Southern Conference teams were automatically placed at a competitive disadvantage. In 1948 the NCAA attempted nationally through its Sanity Code to get institutions to assume greater responsibility for the establishment of similar standards in their athletic programs. Criticism of this code became so widespread, though, that it too was repealed, lasting only three years (Falla, 1981). This allowed athletic programs and athletes to be treated differently and preferentially, as athletics became a commercialized focus of collegiate life.

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